

UNDP | GEF
DANUBE
REGIONAL
PROJECT

Strengthening the Implementation Capacities
for Nutrient Reduction and Trans-boundary
Cooperation in the Danube River Basin

Final Report
Small Grants
First Round

RER03/G31/A/1G/31 PS

Project Component 3.2: Small Grants
Programme

December 20, 2006

Prepared by: Entela Pinguli, Project Manager



THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
for Central and Eastern Europe

Preface

This report was produced by the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) as part of the Danube Regional Project (DRP), which was launched on December 1st, 2002 under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme's Global Environmental Facility (UNDP-GEF). This report covers component 3.2 of the DRP – the 'Small Grants Programme' – which has the aim of strengthening and supporting NGO participation in Danube nutrient reduction by providing small project grants. This component is managed by the REC through its head office in Hungary, in cooperation with its offices in the Danube basin countries.

This report describes the first round of the DRP Grants and especially the implementation of the selected DRP National and Regional projects.

During the first DRP round 65 projects were supported at the national and regional levels with a total of 681,933 USD disbursed, enabling NGOs to contribute to nutrient reduction in eleven Danube Basin countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

Over the course of two and a half years the REC - through its network - has coordinated the selection process as well as monitored the implementation of NGO projects at the national and regional levels. Emphasis has been given to the impact the projects have on nutrient and toxic substance pollution. This report gives insights into what the NGOs have accomplished during the implementation of their projects, and describes the REC's role in assisting them to achieve these results.

The REC's mission is to assist in solving environmental problems in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) by promoting cooperation among non-governmental organizations, governments, businesses and other environmental stakeholders, and by supporting the free exchange of information and public participation in environmental decision-making. The REC has been involved in Danube environment-related projects since its inception in the early 1990s. It has also taken an active role in cooperating with key Danube stakeholders to enable NGO involvement in the international environmental initiatives related to the entire basin.

The Danube is of high importance in the region and thus for the REC. Those organizations that the REC is cooperating closely with include the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) and the Danube Environmental Forum. The REC took part in the Danube pollution Reduction Programme (1997-1999), enabling NGO contributions to the process of pollution reduction. Additionally, the REC participated in the ICPDR expert group developing the Danube River Basin Strategy for Public Participation in River Basin Management Planning 2003-2009, which was adopted by the ICPDR in June, 2003.

In the area of Public Participation, the REC implemented a medium-sized pilot project - Building Environmental Citizenship to Reduce Trans-boundary Pollution in the Danube - in Hungary and Slovenia from 2000-2002. This project was also funded through GEF. Building on the results of this pilot project, a new component has been developed and integrated into the Danube Regional Project - Enhancing Support of Public Participation in Addressing Priority Sources of Pollution ('hot spots') through Improved Access to Information in the Frame of the EU Water Framework Directive (component 3.4). This component is being implemented in Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2004-2006.

Table of contents

- Executive Summary..... 11
- Project description..... 13
- Phase one **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - Preparation work developing the grants documents and process 13
 - Regional Briefing..... 15
 - National grants (first round) selection process 15
 - National Grants monitoring 18
 - National Grants results..... 20
 - Regional Grants (First Round) implemnetation process 29
 - Regional Grants monitoring..... 33
 - Conclusions and future considerations 45
- Project Set-up..... 49

ANNEXES

National Grants

Appendix I – National Grants Announcement

Appendix II – National Grants Guidelines

Appendix III – National Grants Country Reports

Appendix IV – National Grants Monitoring Reports

Appendix V – List of the DRP Grants winners (National and Regional)

Regional Grants

Appendix VI – Regional Grants Announcement

Appendix VII – Regional Grants Guidelines

Appendix VIII – Regional Grants Monitoring Reports

Appendix IX – Regional Grants summaries

Abbreviations

CEE – Central Eastern Europe

CP – Concept Paper

DEF- Danube Environmental Forum

DRP – Danube Regional Project

FP – Full Proposal

ICPDR – International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

REC – The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe

UNDP/GEF – The United Nations Development Programme/Global Environmental Facility

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project was designed to issue grants that enable environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries of the Danube Basin to contribute to the reduction of nutrients and toxic substances.

This project has two main components:

- Nationally-based granting programmes for environmental NGOs in the Danube Basin focusing on issues of national priority related to nutrients and toxic substances; and
- A regional grants programme promoting regional cooperation and supporting regional environmental projects being implemented by NGOs from CEE to address nutrient and toxic substance issues.

From October 2002-2003 the Grants selection process was coordinated at the national and regional level with the following steps:

- Calls were announced at both the national and regional levels, in local languages for national grants and in English for regional grants.
- Concept papers from NGOs throughout the region were collected by the REC's country offices, as well as by the independent REC-Kyiv and REC Moldova offices for national grants (167 CPs in total); and by the REC head office in Szentendre for Regional Grants (16 CPs). Concept papers (CPs) were evaluated by REC staff, DEF representatives and DRP representatives. 109 CPs were chosen to move on to the full proposal (FP) stage at the national level, and 9 were chosen at the regional level.
- As a result of the full proposal selection stage:
 - a. 207,754 USD was awarded to support five regional projects, involving NGOs from more than one country. These projects focus on trans-boundary cooperation, regional networking, stakeholder cooperation, best practices in agriculture and the basin/sub-basin approach to decision making. Additionally 8748 USD were awarded to support the NGO meetings geared toward preparing the proposals.
 - b. 465,431 USD was awarded to support 60 National NGO initiatives, which took a sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to reducing nutrient and toxic substance pollution, focusing on:
 - I. **Agricultural discharge:** 35 % of the projects deal with environmental problems originating from agriculture by, for example, promoting organic farming.
 - II. **Municipal discharge:** 40 % of the projects deal with environmental problems originating from the activities of municipalities (e.g.. wastewater treatment), and/or household and general community activities (e.g. consumption). Projects, for example, aim to improve public awareness of household waste management.

- III. **Land use/wetlands:** 12 % of the projects aimed at improving the function of wetlands and/or limiting erosion by, for example, revitalizing riverbanks or reforestation.
- IV. **Industrial discharge:** 13 % of the projects deal with environmental problems originating from industrial discharge. Project activities, for example, disseminate information on clean technology in mining.

By July 2006 the REC and its network coordinated 12 Winners Meetings with the involvement of all selected NGOs, at the Regional and National levels where 65 contracts (award agreements), were signed specifying budgets, preconditions and provided them with the grants implementation requirements.

From July 2004 – November 2006 REC and its network coordinated the monitoring of all 65 projects, in each of the Danube Countries, at the regional and national level. The projects were visited individually and the assessment of the results indicated that the most popular problems addressed in the first round of DRP grants related to pollution generated by agricultural activities. NGO initiatives addressing agricultural discharge were addressed by almost 40 % of the NGOs, more specifically focusing on addressing flood management, irrigation, and drainage, with attention to the associated pollution-related effects. Additionally, projects promoting eco-farming methods and alternative rural development in the Danube Basin were prominent. This was followed in popularity by projects dealing with municipal discharge by addressing urban waste-water collection and treatment.

During the first round the least popular problem addressed was industrial discharges, with few projects at the national level focusing on reducing the risks of the accidental release of pollutants from facilities.

With respect to land use and wetlands, some projects attempted to resurrect degraded - or construct new - wetlands as a natural method to absorb nutrients. Other projects had a more educational focus, trying to raise public awareness of the importance of wetlands and their functions.

Apart from addressing pollution issues the grants managed to bring the Danube pollution issues onto the agenda of their communities, succeeded in bringing stakeholders around the table to push for locally based solutions to these problems.

Lastly, NGO project management skills and capacities were improved through the granting process via training sessions. Additionally, the use of a regional approach allowed for a sharing of experiences and know-how on the issues at hand as well as enhanced their knowledge on nutrient and toxic pollution as it relates to the Danube basin.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project implementation was split into two phases. The first phase included the selection of the grants at the national and regional levels and was reported on at the end of that phase. The first phase included:

- Preparation work for designing the grants documents and process
- Organising the DRP Regional Briefing of the Country Office people managing the DRP National Grants
- Coordinating the selection process

The second phase of project implementation started with the preparation and negotiation of terms of reference for each country managing National Grants.

These terms of reference included tasks related to the Grants Monitoring process, according to the REC's Grants Manual's instructions:

- Organise a Winners Meeting in each of the Danube Countries
- Manage grants monitoring
- Evaluate the grants' results with the help of indicators
- Disseminate information and results broadly

Preparation work developing the grants documents and process

A consultation meeting was held in June 2002 to facilitate project design and preparation. Representatives of the REC, DEF, WWF, ICPDR and GEF met in Ilmitz, Austria to discuss the small grants programme. An agreement was reached on the REC's granting process, and a framework for its future implementation was established. The results and outcomes of this meeting were taken into consideration during the implementation of the project.

A project committee was established by the REC to ensure quality control and the coordination of activities. The project committee met twice during this phase, and the donor took part in those meetings. The project committee served as a quality control mechanism, evaluating the project. The project committee consists of:

- The project director: Robert Atkinson;
- The project manager: Entela Pinguli (regional grants manager);
- Country office representatives: Richard Muller (REC CO Slovakia) and Radoje Lausevic (REC CO Serbia and Montenegro);
- Donor representative: Andy Garner (UNDP/ GEF Representative); and
- DEF representative: Monika Kovacova.

National and Regional Grants Preparation

Prepared objectives of NGO grants

The main objective of the grants is to support NGOs in CEE and the NIS in carrying out national and regional environmental projects related to nutrient reduction actions in the Danube Basin by supporting the overall objectives of this granting programme.

Defined the scope of the grants

The main scope of the grants is the reduction of nutrient pollution and toxic substances in the Danube Basin.

NGOs were encouraged to involve other stakeholders, such as local authorities, water related institutions, the industrial sector and the agricultural community, and apply the following approaches to reduce nutrient proliferation:

- Managing activities with concrete and measurable impacts on nutrient reduction;
- Changing consumer behaviour;
- Employing a trans-boundary perspective: (increasing the understanding of national contributions of trans-boundary environmental problems);
- Using the watershed approach (especially on land-use development, NGOs should connect the sources of pollution to the impact areas when separated by political boundaries);
- Encouraging multi-stakeholder cooperation;
- Networking (among local, national and regional NGOs);
- Serving as a model for other areas in the Danube River Basin; and
- Addressing policy issues related to Danube nutrient issues.

Considering the fact that NGOs play an important role in pollution reduction issues (as demonstrated in the Danube Pollution Reduction Programme 1999) the tools used in their work can be diverse. The following tools were encouraged in this granting programme:

- Awareness raising and information dissemination through the media;
- Lobbying and campaigning;
- Public participation;
- Environmental education and training;
- Networking and partnerships (e.g. with water agencies);
- Interactive case projects and clean-up actions;
- Monitoring (excluding work that requires technical equipment and certified expertise) as a tool for project implementation; and
- Simple applied research (e.g. opinion polls or assessment of available data).

Grants did not support projects focusing primarily on research or science unless they were linked to other aspects of the project.

Grants Eligibility

Registered NGOs in the Danube countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine with an environmental focus and an NGO bank account were eligible for national and regional grants.

Designed Grants packages

In January 2003 the project team drafted the grants packages for the national and regional grants. These documents are attached as Appendixes XV to XVIII. The grants packages include:

- The grants announcements, indicating the goals and the objectives of each of grant programme;
- The selection criteria;
- An overview of the selection process;
- The grant guidelines (national and regional); and
- The reporting forms and procedures.

Regional Briefing

A briefing was held in February 2003 for the REC's country-based staff (and REC Kiev and REC Moldova representatives) working on the project. Discussions on objectives, guidelines, the announcement procedure and timing for both grants took place. This meeting was a chance to ensure a common understanding of the objectives and expectations of the national grants among the offices involved in project coordination. It also allowed them to contribute to the finalisation of the national grant package, which was to be managed on their part.

As part of the briefing, a workshop on setting indicators and the development of evaluation methodology for the national grants was held. Emphasis was placed on helping the country offices to define indicators of success and means of evaluating NGO grants. In a training meeting the country offices defined the direction that indicators of success should follow. This process was assisted by two external experts: Alexander Zinke and Philip Weller.

A presentation of the cooperative grants process was also given and discussions on the regional grants selection criteria took place. The roles and responsibilities of the country offices in each of the granting programmes were defined and clarified.

Country representatives commented on the documents prepared by the project team at the meeting and the final version of the national grants package was distributed for translation after the final revisions.

In addition to the country office representatives (including representatives of REC-Kiev and REC Moldova) and the external experts, DEF, ICPDR and UNDP/GEF representatives were also present at the meeting.

National grants (first round) selection process

The National Grants Programme is based on the REC's experience in distributing funding to NGOs. The scope of the national grants is defined in the grants announcement and was discussed at the regional briefing. The national grants

<p>Evaluation of concept papers</p>	<p>Country office and DEF focal point representatives review the submitted CPs and decided which were the most relevant and should therefore be developed by the NGOs into a full project proposals.</p> <p>Concept paper selection criteria judged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the relevance of the issue addressed (How does the problem addressed fit into the grant's scope as stated in the announcement?) - the potential impact of the NGO's activities (Do the NGO's activities contribute to nutrient reduction goals?) - the involvement of the stakeholders (Are the identified stakeholders willing to cooperate with the NGO in addressing this problem) - the capability of the NGOs (What is the NGO's previous experience in water, agriculture and nutrient related issues, their background and expertise?) <p>Conditions, preconditions, recommendations and suggestions for improving the quality of the proposals were given to the selected NGOs. For more information, review the national grants concept paper evaluation minutes which were submitted as part of the progress report.</p> <p>The NGOs with the best concept papers were then given the opportunity to write and submit a full proposal to the country offices. Assistance was offered with clear comments and suggestions for improving and preparing a good full proposal.</p>	<p>Country office staff; REC Moldova and REC-Kiev. DEF Focal Points</p>	<p>May 12-18, 2003</p>
<p>Full proposals preparation</p>	<p>NGOs prepared full proposals in cooperation with their stakeholders.</p> <p>During the full proposal preparation the responsible country office staff assisted NGOs by answering questions and providing guidance for the proposal design. Most questions will likely address technical issues related to the granting requirements and how to comply with the National Grant Guidelines (Annex II). However, some NGOs will have content related questions directed at nutrient reduction. This information will be facilitated by the REC with the help of ICPDR, GEF and DEF through their expert database</p> <p>The deadline for full proposals was September 4, 2003.</p>	<p>Selected NGOs; REC Country offices; REC Moldova and REC-Kiev.</p>	<p>June – August 2003</p>
<p>Evaluation of full proposals</p>	<p>Project proposals were accepted in local languages and decisions made on the basis of evaluations by independent local advisory boards (LABs) in each country. In addition to the LAB, REC offices invited representatives of the ICPDR and DEF Focal Point from their countries to take part in the decision-making process.</p> <p>The experts were asked to rate the proposals</p>	<p>REC Country offices; REC Moldova and REC-Kiev; local advisory boards;</p>	<p>October November, 2003</p>

	<p>according to criteria set for the programme (announced in the call for tender) and discuss their scores during an evaluation meeting in the relevant REC country office. Grant selection was based on the project's excellence and feasibility, the presence, number and role of cooperative partners, and the probability of measurable environmental impact in the country.</p> <p>The full proposals were reviewed according to well-developed selection criteria, which addressed:</p> <p>Environmental impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ measurable nutrient pollution reduction results; ▪ model value (can be used as a model for other areas in the Danube River Basin); ▪ process indicators. <p>NGO approach/methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ watershed approach. <p>Cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ multi-stakeholder cooperation; ▪ NGO networking at the national level. <p>Proposal quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ technical aspects of the proposal. <p>Staff capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NGO staff experience and competence <p>Minutes of the evaluation meetings from every participatory country were included in the previous progress report for the Phase one of this project.</p>	<p>DEF Focal points;</p> <p>ICPDR representatives in the country.</p>	
Informing the NGOs	<p>Letters were written to the NGOs informing them of the decision of the grants evaluation process and inviting them to the winners meeting, which will take in the second phase of the project.</p>	<p>REC country offices</p>	<p>December 2003</p>

National Grants monitoring

The total amount of grants awarded for the first round was 465,421 USD. The amounts allocated to each country are noted in the table below. The maximum amount that was to be allocated to any one NGO project at the national level was 15,000 USD, though offices were advised to give over 10,000 USD only in special circumstances.

The NGO demand for the DRP grants at the national level was substantially bigger than the amount allocated. This is illustrated in the following table where the first column indicates the requested amount and the final one the awarded one.

Country	USD Requested	USD Awarded
Bosnia and Herzegovina	57,121	49,849
Bulgaria	51,951	33,470
Croatia	80,671	50,000
Czech Republic	61,555	40,000
Hungary	76,400	49,822
Romania	60,000	29,340
Slovakia	80,992	45,000
Slovenia	87,293	40,000
Serbia and Montenegro	113,327	60,000
Ukraine	70,962	27,950
Moldova	123,922	40,000

Winners Meetings in 11 Danube Countries

During July and August, 2004, the REC Country offices in the Danube Basin countries, and REC Moldova, organised Winners Meetings in their countries. 55 CEE NGOs took part and received instruction on project management and reporting. The Ukrainian Winners Meeting took place later in 2004, due to problems faced in identifying and securing an organisation with the capacity to manage the Ukrainian Grants.

In each case, grant winners were invited to the country office for the meeting. The project leader presented their project to the other grantees. Discussions on the terms of the Award Agreements were conducted, covering such things as: The schedule for providing progress and financial reports, and the schedule for providing the NGO with funding, based upon their progress in implementing the project.

When signed by both the grantee and the Country Director, the Award Agreements became legally binding contracts. The Award Agreement states the approved budget for the grant, the disbursement schedule, the reporting requirements, and any other conditions. Two original copies of the Award Agreement were sent to the NGO project officer who signed and returned both of them to the Country Office. When the signed copies of the Award Agreements were received, the Country Director accepted and signed them, placing one in the grant file and returning the other to the NGO project officer.

The Award Agreement also states that the grantee is obligated to undertake the project as described in the grant application. Any material changes to the project proposal must be submitted in writing in advance to the Grants Manager and must be approved in writing by the Grants manager. Material changes include a budget variance of 10% or more, a change in the dates of project implementation, and significant changes to the nature of the project.

Funds were transferred to the NGO accounts directly from the RE COs, therefore detailed information about the NGO back accounts was attached to the Award Agreements.

National Grants implementation summary in 11 Danube countries

Individual reports prepared by each of the REC offices coordinating and monitoring the NGO work for implementation of the national grants are attached to this report. (Appendix III). The reports indicate the progress of implementation individually for each grant. Additionally, the national reports give some attention to indicators from the grants and their contribution to the main objectives of the DRP project.

From June 2004 to June 2005 the NGOs around the region managed the implementation of the National projects. The REC country offices were assisting implementation as well as monitoring the grants results. The monitoring consisted of direct contacts and report checking as well as visiting the project sites. The monitoring reports of the National grants illustrating the type of the problems encountered by the NGOs during the project implementation are found in Appendix IV.

Since the implementation of the National Grants extends to Ukraine and Moldova, during the first phase of the project the REC created partnerships with the

independent Regional Environmental Centres in these countries which managed the grants selection process: REC-Kiev and REC Moldova. The second phase of project implementation included:

- Monitoring the implementation of the national grants in their countries according to the designed structure, and
- Reporting the results of the project to the REC.

During this phase we faced some problems with regards to the implementation of the National Grants scheme in Ukraine. The problems in Ukraine were caused by the closure of the REC-Kiev office in June of 2004. After the grants selection process, which was managed by REC-Kiev during the first phase of the project, the information about NGO contacts vanished with the staff, and REC had to put some efforts into rebuilding the contacts and working relations with each of the selected NGOs individually. REC Moldova helped in this process and the arrangement made is that REC Moldova is also assisting the REC in monitoring grants implementation in Ukraine. Due to the above mentioned difficulties, Ukrainian grants implementation has been delayed and one of the Ukrainian NGOs has dropped out of the project due to internal management problems.

National Grants results

The list of the selected grants is attached to this report (Appendix V – List of DRP Grants).

Information is also published on the REC's web page:

http://www.rec.org/REC/Programs/NGO_Support/Grants/NationalDanubeGrants/Default.html#results

Four topic areas have been categorised, based on the following definitions:

- *Agricultural discharge*: Projects that deal with environmental problems originating from agriculture by, for example, promoting organic farming.
- *Municipal discharge*: Projects that deal with environmental problems originating from the activities of municipalities (e.g. wastewater treatment), and/or household and general community activities (e.g. consumption). Project activities, for example, aim to improve public awareness of household waste management.
- *Land use/wetland*: Projects that aim at improving the function of wetlands and/or limiting erosion by, for example, revitalizing riverbanks or reforestation.
- *Industrial discharge*: Projects that deal with environmental problems originating from industrial discharge. Project activities, for example, include disseminating information on clean technology in mining.

Here is a breakdown of the projects falling under each of the topics, by country:

Bosnia Herzegovina

Agricultural discharge	Industrial discharge	Land use/Wetland	Municipal discharge
-------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------	----------------------------

Knowing pesticides and their use	Building a partnership in local community against nutrient pollution		Ecological education in primary schools
Ecological view on waters in river Vrbas basin			Protection of river Jadar
Nutrients sources reduction on area of municipalities of Visoko and Kladanj			No phosphorous

NGOs were faced with specific issue of the nutrients reduction for the first time in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Based on their experience on mentioned issue, NGOs had the possibility to work together with other relevant institutions/sectors in preparing and implementing project proposals.

The main strength of successful NGOs was their ability to raise public awareness on different issues, which may indirectly cause pollution reduction. Some of the NGO activities have combined indirect and direct nutrient reduction activities, but the overall focus was on creating public awareness on various issues thereby indirectly reducing nutrients.

There are a range of NGO activities that led to direct nutrient reduction and the removal of toxins. These activities range from the removal of illegal dumps close to waterways to the practical education on the field with farmers about controlled utilization of natural (organic) fertilizers.

Through cooperation with all interested stakeholders, awarded projects and NGOs experience (through its implementation) could serve as a platform for other similar programs of reduction of river's contaminations (from different pollutants). During the project implementation, NGOs and their project partners improved their knowledge/skills on nutrients reduction and lesson learned could offer to the other interested NGOs.

Bulgaria

Agricultural discharge	Industrial discharge	Land use/Wetland	Municipal discharge
Ecoaccent – plant growing in Dobrudzha		Protection and model restoration of floodplain forests	Development of partnership for the reduction of pollution of the Yantra river basin
		Improvement of the environmental state of the dam of Dabravka	

In Bulgaria the project "Conservation and Model Restoration of Floodplain Forests – Contribution to the Reduction of Nutrient Pollution", implemented by Green Balkans, Plovdiv managed to create a model restoration of natural floodplain forests on the Danube islands. They increased capacity of the natural floodplain communities for purification of nutrients in the Danube, through development and use of new forest practices for management of floodplain forests and long-term conservation of existing floodplain habitats. They launched a process for change of forestry practices with new methods of management of the Danube

islands, expanded the network of protected areas with wetlands and natural floodplain habitats on the Bulgarian Danube islands; as well as managed to raise public awareness on the significance of the wetlands and the need for their conservation.

Croatia

Agricultural discharge	Industrial discharge	Land use/Wetland	Municipal discharge
Promoting Methods of Eco and Organic Agriculture	Cleaner production		Protecting the Danube Basin from Pollution, Western Lateral Channel
Agriculture for life: Agriculture as a Friend to Animals - One Step in the Danube Basin Pollution Reduction			Monitoring Drava Pollution and Informing Public and Polluters
What has to be known about Nutrients and Toxic Ingredients in Danube Environment.			

In Croatia two projects addressed agriculture problems by introducing/applying best agricultural practices related to avoiding, minimizing and/or controlling non-point sources of pollution in the ground- and /or surface waters. Through a number of workshops, lectures and distribution of promotion materials they supported organic agriculture attempting to change people’s mentality and attitude towards traditional practices in agriculture, improving local knowledge and skills, networking, strengthening local communities, motivating local NGOs to cooperate.

One of the good examples of a public participation project is “Monitoring of Drava River Pollution and Informing Public and Polluters”. The project managed to raise public awareness and concern, as well as the level of knowledge on the appropriate use of communal sewage systems on which the town Osijek depends. Public pressure was directed towards providers of services and products, which are discharging heavily loaded waste waters into the communal sewage system. Providers of services and products, as well as relevant local/regional authorities were made aware of the legal non-compliance of industrial waste waters discharged in communal sewage systems, with consequences on maintenance costs that have to be collected from citizens.

Czech Republic

Agricultural discharge	Industrial discharge	Land use/Wetland	Municipal discharge
Nutrient reduction through applying biological preparations	Future without toxic 2004 in Danube basin	Reducing eutrophication in Pisechny pond in nature reserve	Public participation on improving water quality in Horni Olsava basin
Eco-farming campaign in the Morava river basin			Environmental education in Morava

In Czech Republic two of the national projects contributed to the application of better agricultural practices with the promotion of ecological farming and

environmental standards in agriculture in Morava river basin. They managed to promote ecological farming among local authorities, regional development institutions and agricultural policy makers, by training 50 stakeholders on the importance of selecting appropriate farming methods that will lead to nutrients reduction.

Other projects contributed to raising awareness of local inhabitants, municipalities and primary schools by organizing educational excursions focused on savings natural floodplains and restoration of river habitats by using phosphate-free detergents and addressing household waste management in villages near the sites.

Hungary

Agricultural discharge	Industrial discharge	Land use/Wetland	Municipal discharge
Water quality protection in the South Great Plain region	Pollution spots along Ipoly river - unveil and map		Trans-danubian creeks and small rivers pollution monitoring
Chemical-free agriculture on floodplains			
Bio-agriculture in Bodrog-koz floodplains	Awareness-raising about the IPPC directive.		
Toxic and nutrient reduction in Sajo river valley			

One of the examples of the Hungarian NGOs addressing the pollution problems generated by agriculture in upper Tisza river is "Grasp the last straw" project. It is concerned with- landscape planning and the promotion of ecological agriculture on wetlands of Bodrogkoz. Through the landscape rehabilitation program the project (re)built an ecological-agricultural system that has long-term economic feasibility. Within the framework of this project 6 agricultural farms were appraised totalling over 430 acres, of which only 170 acres were utilized by following the best available agro-environmental technologies and regulations. All the 6 farms are model value areas serving as good examples for the follow-up.

The cooperation with the land-owning farmers was somewhat unique, as the project team have been assisting the planning and execution period. 13 projects were developed and proposals submitted to various sponsors.

Moldova

Agricultural discharge	Industrial discharge	Land use/Wetland	Municipal discharge
Developing capacities to promote organic farming, reducing nutrient pollution in the Danube river basin (the project covers Falesti district area)			Pollution reduction with nitrogen compounds in the Danube river basin
			Nutrient pollution reduction in the Prut tributary rivers

			A way to reduce the concentration of water biogenic elements (nutrients) in the Danube basin
--	--	--	--

The Moldavian project "Developing capacities to promote organic farming reducing nutrient pollution in the Danube river basin (the project covers Falesti district area)" involved the promotion of organic agriculture methods in order to reduce nutrient and toxic pollution reduction. LPA representatives, local farmers, NGOs and the public were informed through wide information and education campaigns about the negative impact of inefficient and environmentally unfriendly methods. An evaluation commission was created to assess the state of the environment and conduct an inventory of pollution sources. Up-to-date qualitative information was provided to the public. A successful information and education campaign was conducted. 185 representatives of different stakeholders were informed and trained on the best agriculture methods and practices which lead to nutrient and toxic pollution reduction and several promotion materials were produced.

The NGO assisted the farmers to start an environmentally friendly agricultural business. The best agricultural practices were applied on 4 demonstrational land lots. As part of this initiative pollution hotspots in Albinetul Vechi, Calinesti and Chetris settlements were removed (both chemical and household) and the riverbanks were revitalized and reforested.

Romania

Agricultural discharge	Industrial discharge	Land use/Wetland	Municipal discharge
Promoting Measures to be Undertaken for the Reduction of Nutrient Pollutants Originating from Agriculture in the Mehedinti County Danube Basin.			
Program Promoting and Implementing Organic Farming Practices, for the Reduction of Chemical-Farming Substances, in the Low Danube Basin			

Both selected projects in Romania addressed agriculture issues. One of them "Promoting Measures to be undertaken for the Reduction of Agricultural- Originated Nutrient Pollutants in the Mehedinti County Danube Basin" managed to elaborate an Action Plan on the nutrient water pollution at the county level with the involvement of 20 stakeholder representatives (County Council, Public Health Institute, Environmental Protection Agency, Local councils, NGOs, other institutes and representatives of the civil society). The project organised training sessions for 40 local farmers on organic farming best practices as well as conducted a public campaign on the ecological farming benefits and the importance of two natural protected areas in the county that reached 3000 people.

Serbia and Montenegro

Agricultural discharge	Industrial discharge	Land use/Wetland	Municipal discharge
-------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------	----------------------------

Organic agriculture – A step towards Danube river basin preservation	New technologies in Danube watershed mines		DEF Serbia and Montenegro Network towards EU Water Directive implementation
Tara – welfare and obligation			The environmental value of Moravica watershed and pollutants identification
Towards pollution reduction of the upper stream	Protection of Danube watershed from nutrient pollution		

One of the Serbian examples addressing the industrial discharges in the Danube basin is the project: “New technologies in Danube watershed mines”. The project managed a campaign for the introduction of new methods and technologies in the Danube watershed mines which will cause reduction of heavy metal pollution and sustainable mine production in the Basin. The project team developed an action plan for reducing the pollution and promoted the incorporation of the project achievements into the LEAP process in Bor with the participation of experts. Through the media and promotion materials the public was informed on the project’s issues.

Slovakia

Agricultural discharge	Industrial discharge	Land use/Wetland	Municipal discharge
		Revitalization of meadows and nitrogen reduction in Žitava basin	Watercourses are not for sewage!
			Proposal for a participatory strategy to decrease water sources pollution in the Myjava River basin
		River coalitions - cross-sectoral partnerships in 3 Danube sub-basins in Slovakia	Management of national nature reserve Cicovske mrtve rameno
		Revitalisation of the Stupava creek	Martonka is living again
			Small reed bed wastewater treatment plant

The Slovak project “Streams are not drains!” organized by the civic association TATRY raised children’s and teacher’s interest in active education in regards to river pollution problems. The project managed to initiate some small actions at the school level. The artistic competition “Living and dead water” was organized in cooperation with 357 pupils from 24 Slovak schools. The certificate of the adoption of the stream was given to 4 schools.

Within the project timeframe a seminar “River as a living organism” was organized 16 times reaching 402 participants.

CA TATRY prepared the "Autumnal lecture cycle" for the public (November 2004, Liptovsky Mikulas, 9 lectures). It was visited by 148 people. The exhibition "Streams are not drains" was installed in 13 towns for 5500 pupils.

Slovenia

Agricultural discharge	Industrial discharge	Land use/Wetland	Municipal discharge
Promotion of Organic Farming, Environmental Farming Standards			How does the River Clean Itself?
			My Good Neighbour Stream
			Environmentally Friendly Dippers and Washing Detergents

An interesting approach to pollution was followed by the Slovenian NGO in the project Environmentally Friendly Dippers and Washing Detergents.

The project contributed to nutrients (and waste) reduction by influencing consumer behaviour and increasing the use of re-usable diapers and phosphate-free detergents (and consequently reduce the use of conventional detergents).

Project brochures discussed the advantages of re-usable cotton diapers and environmentally friendly washing and aimed to raise awareness among different target groups.

The suggestion for introducing financial subvention for those parents who choose washable diapers was proposed in the two biggest communities in Slovenia – Ljubljana and Maribor. The suggestion was supported with an economic study, which showed the cost of 1 tone of waste (1 baby produces 1 tone of waste in diapering period). Every child that is wrapped in cotton diapers spares at least the costs for 1 tonne of waste deposit to the local community. In the proposal, subvention in the amount of 100 EUR (which is equal to the amount of local disposal costs) should be given to the parents who spare these costs to local community and preserve the environment.

Research into the efficacy of re-usable diapers was also made. Two questionnaires were prepared and distributed, one six months after the project's implementation, and the second at the end of implementing period. The research showed that:

- The share of the re-usable cotton diapers users increase,
- The usage of cotton diapers is bigger in the cities (Ljubljana, Maribor) than in the country,
- Parents opted for re-usable diapers firstly for health reasons (65%), and secondly for contributing to pollution reduction,
- Information was gained about re-usable diapers mostly from the magazines, and only in smaller extent from the health-care professionals (which show the necessity of raising awareness and educating of this target group, and necessity of improving information on the Internet.

Ukraine

Agricultural discharge	Industrial discharge	Land use/Wetland	Municipal discharge

Carpathians without Pesticides – Clean Danube	School of Environmental Leadership	Assisting with the conservation and renovation of wetland ecosystems in the Ukrainian Danube basin	The Blue Gold of the Danube is our Common Heritage
---	------------------------------------	--	--

The Ukrainian project “Carpathians without pesticides- clean Danube” had an indirect impact on nutrient and toxic reduction in the region of Tisa, Prut and Seret Danube Basin Rivers. Primarily, through its large information, education and media campaign it contributed to raise public awareness concerning the negative impact of pesticides pollution on the quality of the environment and of course human health. Also, by creating the “Carpathians Ecopulse” network, the NGOs contributed to initiate and raise local youth activism: raise local awareness and information, conduct ecological classes in schools, undertake activities of river bank revitalization, etc. The NGO was also involved in the “Kornalovici War”, process addressing pollution and environmental degradation and destruction on the Kornalovici tract.

The project involved 12 localities working directly with the LPA representatives. Also, in order to initiate the project action plan and mobilize the local populations, the project team worked directly with the directors of the local schools and universities and of course the NGOs from the region, both ecological and juridical. The student and pupils composing the “Carpathian Ecopuls” network were well informed and trained to contribute to contribute to the achievement of project results and, also, to promote and consider this knowledge and experience in their future work.

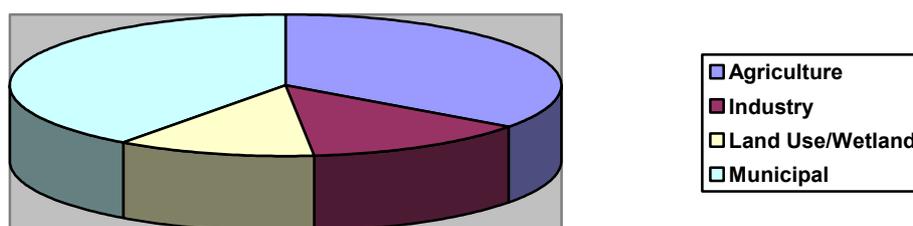
National Grants by Topic

The following table provides an overview of the national grants distribution among topic areas:

Country	Agricultural Discharge	Industrial Discharge	Land Use + Wetlands	Municipal Discharge	Number of projects
BiH	3	1	0	3	7
Bulgaria	1	0	2	2	5
Croatia	3	1	0	2	6
Czech Republic	2	1	1	2	6
Hungary	4	2	0	1	7
Moldova	1	0	0	3	4
Romania	2	0	0	0	2
Serbia and Montenegro	3	2	0	2	7
Slovakia	0	0	3	5	8
Slovenia	1	0	0	3	4
Ukraine	1	1	1	1	4
Totals:	21	8	7	24	60
Percentage:	35%	13,3%	11,65	40%	100%

It is clear from the table that there is a strong focus on eliminating pollution originating from agricultural discharge and from municipal discharge. These two areas are perceived by the NGOs as the most important sources of pollution. The industrial discharges and land use/wetland projects were in minority in this round of the projects, but on the other hand, there were several good projects focused on cleaner production, toxicity reduction (e.g. Future without toxic 2004 in Danube basin implemented in the Czech Republic) or helping to save critically endangered floodplains (e.g., Protection and model restoration of floodplain forests) which may serve as a model for other similar projects.

The figure below illustrates the topic areas graphically:



Projects addressing agricultural discharges employed methods of organic agriculture promotion, pilot projects and information dissemination.

The quality of NGO projects at the national level indicated in most cases a high quality of work, a good understanding of the issue, a strong commitment to produce meaningful outputs and a good sensitivity towards the role NGOs can and should play within their countries.

The technical quality of projects in relation to the DRP key issues nutrient management, and toxics reduction was assessed as fairly good by the REC and

independent evaluation of the DRP conducted by Alexander Zinke in March 2005. Nevertheless, most NGOs could have benefited better from some technical advice of ICPDR or DRP network's expertise in order to make their projects more successful and more realistic. This refers to topics such as relevant contact to expert institutions, access to relevant data and information and studies to assure water quality monitoring (e.g. relevance of NGO action in comparison to laboratories).

Regional Grants (First Round) implementation process

The Regional Grants Programme is based on the REC's experience in distributing funding to NGOs working at the regional level. The scope of the regional grants is defined in the grants announcement and addresses the project objective at the regional level. The regional call is being managed by the staff of the NGO Support Programme at the REC's head office.

Those projects that best apply the working methods and tools mentioned in the grants announcement (Appendix VI) were chosen through a competitive granting process at the regional level. The selection process for regional grants concluded in November 2003.

The expected skills and competence of the NGOs chosen, which were central to the selection process, are also outlined in the grants announcement.

Goals and objectives

The goal of the regional grants is to promote regional cooperation among the NGOs of the Danube countries and to enable them to contribute to nutrient reduction in the Danube Basin.

NGOs are encouraged to work together on projects that address demonstration activities and awareness-raising campaigns for sustainable land management and pollution reduction (nutrients) in the agricultural, industrial and municipal sectors.

The REC facilitated cross-border cooperation by providing information about potential NGO partners from different neighbouring countries. The DEF Network assisted with the distribution of information about the grants among NGOs in the Danube countries.

Grants selection process

Regional grants are up to USD 35,000 each. In exceptional cases, proposals that involve more than three NGOs, require some form of construction or involve networking, the amount can exceed this limit by 50 percent (i.e. EUR 50,000).

A two-stage application process was applied for regional grants (concept paper and full proposal stages). During the concept paper and full proposal stages, the project team assisted NGOs by answering questions and providing guidance for developing partnerships.

The work plan for regional grants was:

Steps	Description	Staff	Time
Announcement	<p>The regional grants call for tender and grants guidelines were distributed widely to the NGOs of the 11 Danube countries. The call was posted on the REC website and a shorter version was published in regional and national REC bulletins.</p> <p>Furthermore, the announcement was distributed through the following channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • environmental and NGO e-mail lists; • NGO meetings in the countries; • DEF Network/website; • direct mail; • NGO websites (regionally and nationally); 	<p>NGO Support Programme;</p> <p>REC Country Offices;</p> <p>REC Moldova and REC-Kiev;</p> <p>DEF structure.</p>	February 28, 2003

	<p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICPDR websites. 		
Applications – concept papers	<p>Regional grants selection is a two-phase process: the concept paper phase and the full proposal phase.</p> <p>Concept papers were accepted, in English, at the REC head office in Szentendre, Hungary up to the deadline.</p>	NGO Support Programme.	April 30, 2003
Evaluation of concept papers	<p>Concept Paper Evaluation Meeting took place in June 12th 2003 in Szentendre. The meeting was an internal one at the REC. There were 16 Concept Papers submitted, out of which 9 were awarded.</p> <p>Total amount awarded was EUR 9,268.</p> <p>Method used during the meeting:</p> <p>Three of the sixteen concept papers were removed from the scoring process as they were deemed incomplete. All thirteen remaining papers were reviewed, starting with that rated highest and working down. Evaluator's comments were read for each paper and discussion occurred until consensus was reached as to whether or not projects proposed should advance to the full proposal stage.</p> <p>The REC reviewed the concept papers against set criteria including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the relevance of the issue (How does the identified regional/cross-border problem address the issue identified in the announcement?) - the impact of the NGO activities (To what extent will the NGO's activities contribute to nutrient reduction?) - the regional NGO cooperation and involvement of the stakeholders (Is the cross-border or regional NGO cooperation feasible and are the partners committed? Are the stakeholders willing to cooperate with the NGO in addressing the regional problem?) - the capacity of the NGO (What is the NGO's previous experience in water related issues? its background? expertise?) <p>The criteria were made available to the NGOs through the call for tender and grant proposal guidelines.</p> <p>The country offices commented on the NGOs involved.</p> <p>Only NGO projects selected from this phase were offered the opportunity to compete for the grants. Conditions, preconditions, recommendations and suggestions for improving the quality of the</p>	<p>NGO Support Programme;</p> <p>REC Country offices;</p> <p>REC Moldova and REC-Kiev.</p>	June 12, 2003

	proposals, collected from the concept paper evaluation process were given to the selected NGOs. The minutes of the regional CP Evaluation meeting were presented to DRP in the Progress report.		
Project preparation meeting	<p>The lead and partner NGOs prepares a regional grant proposal together in the partner preparation meeting, which took place in one of the partner's countries. The proposals were prepared according to the Regional Grants full proposal guidelines (Appendix VII), as provided by the REC.</p> <p>NGOs prepared the full proposals taking into consideration the REC comments and recommendations from the concept paper evaluation.</p> <p>The deadline for full proposals was October 21, 2003</p>	Selected NGOs.	July – October 2003
Evaluation of full proposals	<p>In the full proposal stage the REC project team selected independent experts for the evaluation panel based on their curricula vitae and recommendations.</p> <p>Full Proposal Evaluation Meeting took place in November 3rd 2003 in Szentendre, Hungary. At the meeting there were present independent experts Ralph Luken and Alexander Zinke, DEF Representative Monika Kovacova, DRP representative Andy Garner, ICPDR representative Jasmine Bachmann, and REC representatives Entela Pinguli and Cerasela Stancu. Todd Schenk was taking minutes.</p> <p>Here are some statistics from the meeting: Total Full Proposals Submitted: 8 Total Full Proposals Awarded: 4 Total Full Proposals Pending: 1 Total Full Proposals Rejected: 3 Total Amount Awarded: 207,754 USD</p> <p>Method used for the evaluation: Full Proposals were collected by the NGO Support Programme Staff and checked for completeness. Proposals were copied and distributed to evaluators, and sent to the relevant Country Offices by the project teams. Evaluators reviewed projects, providing comments and scores for each proposal using the standard REC project evaluation sheet. Scores were collected from evaluators by the NGO Support Programme staff and tabulated, providing an initial ranking from highest rated project to lowest. Projects were considered in this order at the evaluation meeting. Evaluators were asked to provide comments, Country Office comments were read and considered, and the decision to support or reject projects, and how much to give to those supported, were made collectively.</p> <p>The full proposal evaluation consisted of two phases: the individual evaluation and the meeting.</p>	NGO Support Programme; REC Country offices; REC Moldova and REC-Kiev; Water Experts; DEF Secretariat; ICPDR experts.	November 3, 2003

	<p>For the individual evaluation, proposals were distributed to all experts to review the individual proposals. The evaluation package included the selection criteria and the instructions explaining the evaluation process, proposals, call for tender and the grants guidelines.</p> <p>A letter emphasising the most important issues related to the evaluation process and explaining what is expected of them during the evaluation process was prepared by the REC and addressed to the independent experts.</p> <p>As a second step, an evaluation meeting was organised by the REC at the head office in Szentendre.</p> <p>The selection criteria for choosing projects included:</p> <p>Environmental impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ measurable results of nutrient pollution reduction; ▪ model value (can be used as a model for other areas in the Danube River Basin); ▪ process/stress reduction indicators. <p>NGO approach/methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ feasible and effective methods; ▪ trans-boundary perspective/watershed approach. <p>Cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ feasible regional/cross-border cooperation; ▪ multi-stakeholder cooperation. <p>Proposal quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ feasible and realistic action plan; ▪ cost-effective budget. <p>Staff capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ staff experience and competence on the issue. <p>The REC country office and REC Moldova and REC-Kiev contributed to the evaluation with their comments on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The relevance of the issue for that particular country; - The methods employed by the NGOs; and - Staff capacity. 		
Informing the NGOs	Letters were written to the NGOs informing them of the decision of the grants evaluation process and inviting them to the winners meeting, which will take in the second phase of the project.	NGO Support Programme	November 2003

Regional Grants monitoring

In the first round, 207,754 USD was awarded as regional grants to NGOs throughout the Danube watershed. The maximum that was to be allocated to an individual project was 50,000 USD.

The list of the regional Grants winners included:

<p>Project Number: 21673</p>	<p>Project Phase: Full proposal, Project Status: Awarded – 45,300 EUR Topic: Cooperative, Sub Topic: Danube Project title: Addressing Nutrient and Toxic Pollution in the Sub-basins of the Morava, Mura and Ogosta rivers. Name of Leading NGO: DAPHNE - Centre for Applied Ecology Project Leader: Andrea Vicenikova, Slovakia Project partners and countries: Centre for Environmental Information and Education, Bulgaria, Ecological Centre of Pomurje, Slovenia</p>
<p>Project Number: 21674</p>	<p>Project Phase: Full proposal, Project Status: Awarded – 35,000 EUR Topic: Cooperative, Sub Topic: Danube Project title: The Prut basin wide approach for nutrient reduction and cross border cooperation (PBWA) Name of Leading NGO: Eco Counselling Center Galati Project Leader: Mirela Leonte, Romania Project partners and countries: Ecological Movement of Moldova, Republic of Moldova</p>
<p>Project Number: 21675</p>	<p>Project Phase: Full proposal, Project Status: Awarded – 45,000 EUR Topic: Cooperative, Sub Topic: Danube Project title: The support and promotion of ecological agriculture in the production areas located in the Danube Basin. Name of Leading NGO: PRO BIO Association of Organic Farmers Project Leader: Dipl. Ing. Jiri Urban, Czech Rep. Project partners and countries: Information Centre for the Development of Moravske Kopanice, p.b.c., Czech Rep. Natural Food Association "TERRA`S", Serbia and Montenegro Ekotrend, Slovakia Foundation for Organic Agriculture "Bioselena", Bulgaria</p>
<p>Project Number: 21678</p>	<p>Project Phase: Full proposal, Project Status: Pending 32,494 EUR Topic: Cooperative, Sub Topic: Danube Project title: Danube-Elbe-Oder Canal: grassroot-national-European campaign to prevent the biggest wetland loss threat in Central Europe Name of Leading NGO: Hnuti Duha Friends of the Earth Czech Republic Project Leader: Pavel Pribyl, Czech Rep. Project partners and countries: Friends of the Earth Slovakia, Slovakia</p>
<p>Project Number: 21681</p>	<p>Project Phase: Full proposal, Project Status: Awarded – 49,970 EUR Topic: Cooperative, Sub Topic: Danube Project title: Networking the river coalitions for healthy watershed. Name of Leading NGO: SOSNA Civic Association Project Leader: Stefan Szabo, Slovakia Project partners and countries: HOLOCEN Nature Protection Organisation, Hungary Ecological Association Green Osijek, Croatia, Transylvanian Carpathia Society - Satu Mare (EKE), Romania</p>

Regional Winners meeting in Hungary

The Regional Winners Meeting was held in Budapest, Hungary, on June 26th, 2004, with the participation of the five NGO leaders of the Regional Grants that were selected.

Meeting goal

The main goal of the meeting was to review and sign the award agreements between the NGOs and the REC, as well as to provide explanations on the REC Grants Requirements and Reporting Forms to NGOs. Any clarification about the projects, including the way the pre-conditions were addressed, was discussed during the meeting. In addition to this, the meeting provided an opportunity for the NGOs to present their projects and meet all organizations that were awarded a grant under this call. The NGOs met the Grants Manager assigned to their projects, which is important as this person is their main contact person at the REC during project implementation.

NGO Presentations

The NGOs were asked to present their projects in the winners meeting. The time scheduled for each project was 30 minutes. Each presentation was 15 minutes, and an additional 15 minutes was allocated for questions and clarifications. Presentations were to be prepared in PowerPoint and highlight:

- The problem addressed by the project and the relevance to the scope of the call;
- The goal and objectives and how do they relate to the Grant Programme objectives;
- The methods for project work and cooperation, and rationale of the partnership;
- Time frame of the activities;
- Expected project outcomes and results, and how they contribute to the Grants Programme/ Danube Regional Project purpose; and
- Indicators of success, ensuring the achievement of the project objectives.

Award Agreements

Following the REC's standard procedures, NGOs would normally sign their Award Agreements, which serves as legal contracts by stating the disbursement of funds, the reporting schedule and other terms and conditions, at the Winners Meeting. In this particular case, due to the contract delay, the Award Agreements were discussed but not signed during this meeting. The REC signed the Award Agreements within days after the contract with the donor was signed. Prior to transferring the first instalment, the lead NGOs had to send the sub-award agreement(s) to their partner NGO(s) for signature. The first instalment was transferred to each of the organizations involved only after the lead NGO and the REC signed their Award Agreements, and the sub-award Agreements were signed and stamped by the lead and partner NGOs were provided to the REC.

Regional Grants implementation progress

NGOs started working on the implementation of Regional Grants immediately after the Award Agreements were signed in August, 2005 (after the contract between DRP and the REC was finalised).

The grants monitoring process consisted of:

- *Direct contacts:* Direct contacts were initiated at the Winners Meeting. In order to keep in contact with the NGOs throughout project implementation the grantees informed the REC in advance about any event organized

within the framework of the grant so a representative could attend. Grantees must also officially request and justify any changes to budget items.

- *Two reports were reviewed (progress report and final report). The review consisted of:*
 - Assessing the activities according to the plan (project proposal)
 - Checking to what extent the projects have achieved the results set by phase and overall
 - Checking the products and their quality
 - Checking if any changes occurred during project implementation, and how this change is reflected in the project.
- *Site visits:* One of the most efficient ways how to keep contact with grantees, foster mutual cooperation and keep the projects on the track are site visits and personal communications that include monitoring of results against submitted proposals. The REC organizes these meeting in close cooperation with the leading NGOs and project partners, preferably in conjunction with project activities organized under project implementation (e.g., conferences or training organized, campaign actions). In this way, it is possible to see real involvement of stakeholders, quality of implementation and potential challenges or bottle-neck in the projects.

The meetings usually take place in the office space of NGOs which makes possible a direct overview of how the project is administered. Whenever possible, REC country representatives from local field offices are involved in the meetings. Every site visit requires substantial preparation on the NGOs behalf. They are asked to prepare project files, papers, documentation, present outcomes and deliverables, and financial accounting. REC use this opportunity (besides providing feedback on the project activities and outcomes) also for developing capacities of the involved NGOs for better management of the projects and preparation of reporting and media outreach of the results.

Each site visit is documented with a "Trip Report", which identifies the positive and negative issues of project implementation and points out the changes and recommendations for future actions agreed upon between the REC and the NGOs. This report serves as the guidelines what areas require attention in the project monitoring as well as outstanding issues to be addressed.

The trip reports of the Regional Grants monitoring are attached (Appendix VIII)

Regional Grants summary results

The Regional grants brought together 15 NGOs and a number of stakeholders in working together for the Danube river basin. Projects applied different approaches ranging from broad promotion to specific targeted preventive work. These ranged from introducing and promoting best agriculture practises and environmentally friendly technologies to campaigning against the construction of a canal to specific direct actions which consisted of building reed beds in Bulgaria,

cleaning of streams in the Morava and Ogosta watersheds to introducing a model example of water quality improvement. Innovative approaches were used by the NGOs in Slovakia and Hungary in building collations among the major stakeholders for a healthy watershed. Through a regional grant Romanian and Moldovian NGOs facilitated a regional, trans-boundary approach for nutrient reduction and cross-border co-operation. The project enabled 18 multi-stakeholders' meetings in the pilot areas of the Prut basin to ensure transparency and public participation during the development of the Draft Prut River Basin Management Plan by the governmental experts in-line with the EU Water Framework Directive. Czech, Slovak and Serbian NGOs dealt with organic agriculture promoting organic farming practices in the region. Bioacademy, which is a platform for learning more about organic farming organised every year by the Pro-bio Ngo in Czech Republic, included a workshop on this topic in the 2005 session. During the course the Action Plan of Organic Farming Development in the Danube Basin was established. This event met a great international response (about 20 participating countries, ministers and EU representatives).

The following information gives details of the results and achievements of each regional project within the first round of the DRP Grants.

Project number: 21673
Project title: Addressing Nutrient and Toxic Pollution in the Sub-basins of the Morava, Mura and Ogosta rivers.
Key Environmental Issues: Nutrient reduction; Education; Information; Media; Water pollution;
Short description: The main goal of the project was to raise awareness on water pollution and its consequences in three selected river basins - Morava River (Slovakia), Mura River (Slovenia) and Ogosta River (Bulgaria) and to contribute to the reduction of nutrient pollution. The project have been promoting the sub-basin approach to dealing with pollution problems and will serve as a model for addressing problems in a river basin - including both technical issues and public participation. The project has targeted local people, local stakeholders (local authorities, farmers, water authorities, local NGOs) and school children in the three target basins.
Results: By the implementation of a strategy for the public information, motivation and action the general knowledge and awareness about the water pollution issue and necessity for each individual to get involved in pollution reduction was increased. Specific local actions focused on cleaning of streams in the Morava and Ogosta watersheds organized for demonstration. Water issues were strengthened in the selected primary school curriculum. Promotion environmentally friendly farming methods and alternative rural development. A local water pollution reduction plans were prepared (or the process of preparation started). A model example of water quality improvement on local level was the construction of waste water treatment plant using constructed wetland in the village of Falkovetc in Bulgaria.
Products: As a result of data collection about point and non-point sources of water pollution a leaflet was produced in national languages. In Slovakia the leaflet was titled " <u>Sources of Water Pollution in Morava River Basin</u> " – 2000 copies, in Slovenia in 1000 copies and in Bulgaria it is copied and distributed according to the request. Resulting from the Public River Strategy following leaflets were produced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<u>Liquid Manure is not the Water</u>" – PEC – December 2004, in 1000 copies. • "<u>Wetlands and Water</u>" – DAPHNE – June 2005 in 2000 copies. • "<u>Agriculture and Water Protection</u>" – DAPHNE – July 2005 in 2000 copies. • "<u>The Water Framework Directive of EU</u>" – DAPHNE – February 2006 in 2000 copies. • "<u>The Water Framework Directive of EU</u>" – CEIE – in 500 copies. • "<u>Why Wetlands are Important</u>" – CEIE – in 500 copies. It brings background information and description about wetlands, problems consequent the destruction of the wetlands, rehabilitation of the wetlands, how can every interested person contribute. • "<u>What is Wetland</u>" – CEIE – in 500 copies. • "<u>Water Resource Protection across Borders</u>" was published in four languages, each separately, in different amount of copies – Slovak and Bulgarian version – in 900 copies each, Slovenian in 700 copies and English in 500 copies.

Total awarded: 45300 USD		
Project start / finish: July 2004 / June 2006		
REC Grants Officer: Richard Filcak		
Project leader: Andrea Vicenikova		
Leading NGO: DAPHNE - Centre for Applied Ecology Podunajská 24 821 06 Bratislava Slovakia Tel: +421 2 455 240 19 Fax: +421 2 455 240 19 Email: daphne@changenet.sk	First Partner: Centre for Environmental Information and Education 1303 Sofia 17A Sofronyi Bratchanski Str. 3rd floor, app. 9. Tel: +359 2 989 27 85 Fax: +359 2 989 27 85 E-mail: ceie@iterra.net	Second Partner: Ecological Centre of Pomurje 9000 Murska Sobota TRG Zmage 8. Tel: +386 2 514 1862 Fax: +386 2 514 1848 E-mail: milan.vogrin@guest.arnes.si

Project number: 21674
Project title: The Prut basin wide approach for nutrient reduction and cross border cooperation (PBWA)
Key Environmental Issues: Nutrient reduction; Awareness raising; Danube; Decision making; Education; Information; Networking; Public participation; Monitoring/Research
<p>Short description: The project targeted the high organic pollution of the Prut River, which studies have attributed to farm runoff (76%) and also municipal sources (24%). This pollution feeds algae blooms in the Black Sea, which deprives of oxygen other aquatic organisms.</p> <p>Project Overall Goal is to facilitate a regional, trans-boundary approach for nutrient reduction and cross-border co-operation and enable multi-stakeholders' involvement; to ensure transparency and participation during the development of the Draft Prut River Basin Management Plan by the governmental experts in line with the EU Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>The methodology consisted on: Applying a regional approach with view to co-operation, networking, trans-boundary perspective, watershed, and multi-stakeholders' approach; Contribute to policy changes; Take innovative and creative approaches to nutrient and toxics-related problems by implementing demonstrative measures: compost and reed-bed buffer areas.</p> <p>The main tools used during the project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Environmental education and training:</i> 269 teachers & 1395 students mainly from Mastacani, Baurci Moldoveni, Galati, and Chisinau attended training sessions, outdoors activities and received materials; • <i>Public participation:</i> 1210 people attended 18 multi-stakeholder meetings organized in the pilot areas and other locations From the Prut basin. Thus increased visibility of the nutrient problem & PWBA project was insured. In the pilot areas the involvement in developing local plans and future projects increased also. • <i>Networking and developing partnerships:</i> the March 2005 Inception Conference and the 2006 meetings attended both by NGOs & GOs lead to an increased cooperation among participants, and to the establishment of the Moldavian NGO platform " The Alliance for a Clean Prut"; The meetings also contributed to the lobbying and campaigning process. • <i>Interactive case projects</i> monitoring the implementation of the compost facilities in the schools and the development of the reed-bed buffer areas established in the pilot areas. In Mastacani, the simple applied research was used to demonstrate the efficiency of the reed-bed buffer area. The analyses performed with MERCK reflectometer registered decrease by 42% of the nutrients from the landfill run-off.
<p>Results: Approximately 50.000 people got access to project related information through the activities developed, materials distributed and the web-page. In Moldova Rep. "The Alliance for the Clean Prut" is formed and its members started to be involved in the process of developing the Prut Management Plan. In the pilot areas Mastacani (RO) and Baurci Moldoveni (MD), Organic Waste management Plans are in development and the nutrient run-offs were diminished thanks to the reed-bed buffer areas restored. The project team</p>

increased its knowledge and skills related to the issues approached within the project.

Products:

- Dedicated web-page EN: <http://www.cceg.ro/eng/projectPrut.htm> & RO: www.cceg.ro/proiect-prut.htm
- Printed materials: Leaflets 4000 copies; 2000 posters, 3 Natura supplements 27000 copies total;
- 4 Outside metal panels (2*1,2 m displaying 6 different posters), Inside panels (8 types); Exhibition panels (12 types);
- Environmental Education kit (75 booklets & 100CDs distributed);
- Compost bins functional in the pilot area schools and functional reed-bed buffer areas.

How did this project contributed to the DRP Grants scope:

The project has an excellent out rich and is very community based, which is very positive approach for such a project. The highlight of the project is the ability to bring the stakeholders together and maintaining this network throughout project implementation.

“The Alliance for the Clean Prut” developed though your project is developing the Prut Management Plan which hopefully will continue their efforts not only in making the plan but also in implementing it.

In the pilot areas Mastacani (RO) and Baurci Moldoveni (MD), Organic Waste management Plans are under development.

The Project activities and outcomes contributed to the overall grants scope through:

- Demonstrating a interactive, participatory approach to improve the water policy and management through stakeholders integration and cross border cooperation
- Promoting the implementation of replicable and sustainable pilot projects for rural communities to improve their water resource usage in both countries.
- Increasing the stakeholder’s awareness of the water values and its sustainable usage.

In both countries most of the project activities continue even if some are developed on a smaller scale than previously. Romania: Environmental education activities will continue to be organised in Mastacani and not only, financing for these activities being ensured by the Ministries of Environment and Foreign Affairs Luxembourg and the World Bank program for rural schools. The networking activities are integrated within ECCG & EMM program as Danube Environmental Forum National Points. Mastacani commune together with ECCG is working on finalising the design and the project proposals for 2 projects aiming to improve the waste management and infrastructure. Moldova: The youth initiative group formed during the PBWA project will look after the buffer area and they intend to register as an NGO. The NGOs members of the “Alliance for the Clean Prut” launched several projects such as: “Clean village-clean Prut river” - Izvorul Cristalin AO; “Planting Tree Protection” - Cucoara OO; “Larga spring reconstruction” – Nicolida Nord NGO; etc.

Total awarded: 35000 USD

Project start / finish: Oct 2004 / June 2006

REC Grants Officer: Todd Schenk

Project leader: Mirela Leonte

Leading NGO:

Eco Counselling Center Galati
Basarabiei Street no. 2.
800201 Galati
Romania
Tel: +40 236 499957
Fax: +40 236 312331
Email: eco@cceg.ro;
Cceg@home.ro

First Partner:

Ecological Movement of Moldova
2004MD Chisinau
Serghei Lazo St., no 13
Tel: +3732 237423
Fax: +3732 232408
E-mail: renitsa@eco.moldnet.md

Project number: 21675

Project title: The support and promotion of ecological agriculture in the production areas located in the Danube Basin.

Key Environmental Issues: Nutrient reduction; Agriculture; Organic Farming

Short description: The Danube Basin is a traditional area of intensive farming. The original agriculture in all the relevant countries has been converted into intensive industrial farming (conventional

agriculture), with an extended use of industrial fertilizers and chemical pesticides. Conventional farming causes erosion and is a large source of pollution of both ground and surface water. It is impossible to reduce the amount of these polluting substances without a change in the farming practices. Problem solution can be expansion of Organic Farming (OA) into production areas in the Danube basin. Aims of the project are the Dissemination of OA in the significant agricultural areas of the Danube basin, Promote OA among farmers, Promote OA among teachers, students, university management, advisors, state administration officials and consumers, Acquaint these target groups with the risks involved in conventional agriculture from the point of view of damaging the environment (especially in view of water pollution).

Results:

An expert argument study entitled „Organic Farming and Water“ topped up the range of arguments for OF. The project achieved to move the focus on improving conditions of subsidies for OF in production areas – on arable land (successful in the Czech Republic – in the proposal of EAFRD Programme, subsidies for arable land have increased by 50% and for special crops by 100%; in 2005 acreage of organic arable land extended by 1000 ha; new sales programmes were launched in Moravia - “Organic Veg” sales programme for supermarkets). In Slovakia, during implementation of this project, number of organic farms increased from 131 (in 2004) to 270 (in 2006).

The information from Bioacademy were spread spread through traditional channels (Abstract Proceedings, CD, Internet, Press Report) and consequentially by organized lectures at agricultural universities in all project countries. “Open days” on farms were organised in all project counties, and leaflets were produces for farmers as well as consumers.

The Bioacademy had very successful results for this project, even though it involves lobbying, education, networking, teaching and promotion. Bioacademy 2004 (devoted to OF and water) and Bioacademy 2005 (financially supported by this project, included a workshop on OF and water, and the Action Plan of OF Development in the Danube Basin was formed).

An exceptional success is the fact that this rather small (in European measures) project met such a great international response (about 20 participating countries, ministers and EU representatives) Bioacademy 2004 and 2005 was held under the aegis (umbrella) of IFOAM international organization covering the whole of Europe.

Products:

- A network of cooperating, OF-oriented organizations in the Danube basin established
- Action Plan of OF Development in the Danube Basin elaborated
- A study on OF importance for quality of water including suggestions for solutions in individual countries – elaborated, translated into national languages, printed, distributed, published on the Internet, passed onto prominent politicians and state officials, presented at Bioacademy 2005
- Bioacademies 2004 and 2005 on influence of agriculture on water, ecological alternatives proposed to reduce water pollution in the Danube basin
- The Bioacademy had many participants (at least 150), the results / outputs of Bioacademy were published (Abstract Proceedings, CD, articles in press, Internet)
- Important regional politicians participated in Bioacademy and negotiated with representatives of farmers, a press declaration was issued
- Within Bioacademy a seminar on OF in the Danube basin was held, Action Plan was discussed and approved, a meeting of all project partners was organized.
- After Bioacademy several excursions were organized (to countries: CZ, A, SK, H, D)
- Seminars on “OF and water” were held at agricultural universities in CZ, SK, SMN and BG. During them outputs of Bioacademy were distributed (proceedings, CDs, studies)
- A specialist leaflet „OF and Water“ for farmers was published and distributed in 4 languages 2500 copies each
- A popular leaflet „Organic Farming and Organic Food“ for consumers was published and distributed in 4 languages 2500 copies each
- 4 pilot farms were appointed in the production areas (CZ, SK, SMN, BG)
- Open Days were held at these farms (at least 50 participants at each event)

Total awarded: 45000 USD

Project start / finish: July 2004 / July 2006

Grants Officer: Erzsebet Aszalos

Project leader: Dipl. Ing. Jiri Urban

Leading NGO:
PRO BIO Association of Organic

First Partner:
Foundation for Organic

Second Partner:
Natural Food Association

Farmers Nemocnicni 53. 78701 Sumperk Czech Rep. Tel: +420 583 216 609 Fax: +420 583 214 586 Email: pro-bio@pro-bio.cz	Agriculture "Bioselena" 4300 Karlovo V. Karaivanov str. 36 Tel: +359 335 98365 Fax: +359 335 92038 E-mail: headoffice@bioselena.com	"TERRA`S" 24000 Subotica Trg. Cara Jovana Nenada 15. Tel: +381 24 554 600 Fax: +381 24 553 116 E-mail: terras@terras.org.yu
Third Partner: Ekotrend 907 01 Myjava M.R. Stefanika 517 Tel: +421 34 621 6037 Fax: +421 34 621 6037 E-mail: ekomy@ecotrend.sk	Fourth Partner: Informacni stredisko pro rozvoj Moravskych Kopanic, o.p.s. 68774 Stary Hrozenkov Stary Hrozenkov 11 Tel: +420 572696323 Fax: E-mail: iskopanice@razdva.cz	

Project number: 21678	
Project title: Danube-Elbe-Oder Canal: grassroot-national-European campaign to prevent the biggest wetland loss threat in Central Europe	
Key Environmental Issues: Decision making; land use; Wetland management; policy policy; Lobbying; Media	
Short description: The project aims to prevent some of the most important wetlands in the Danube basin from Danube-Oder-Elbe Canal. Remaining natural parts of the Morava River so far eliminate much of the pollution from agriculture, industry and households by serving as natural filters that trap sediments and capture pollutants. The project will be carried on local, national as well as international levels. This waterway project is a threat to the Morava river floodplains, including several Ramsar sites and key habitats of endangered species. The project aimed to prevent deterioration of the wetlands and floodplains adjacent to Morava river, Czech, Slovak and Austrian tributary of Danube. For this an official rejection of the canal by relevant local, national and EU authorities is essential. Such official rejections could provide the necessary political environment to demand the exclusion of the DOE route from zoning and infrastructure development plans, thus entailing the end of government planning for the canal.	
Results: The main goal of the project was to prevent the wetland loss that would be caused if the canal project would move ahead in the speed that was planned by its promoters in 2003, was achieved. Taken several last decades, nowadays a position of project is weakened significantly. Furthermore, the plan to reconsider its position in the zoning reserves that seems to take place in 2007, if successful, would put it back beyond the 1981. At the same time a chance to get it financed from the EU funds in the 2007-2013 period is not the case anymore, and there seem to be good grounds to expect similar situation after 2013. The project NGOs are therefore satisfied that their effort contributed to opening discussion and halting project which could lead to significant impacts on the environment.	
Products: Position paper (of the Life for the Danube, Oder and Elbe rivers coalition to the project was issued. The paper was distributed to the decision-makers on the regional and national level. It is posted at: http://www.hnutiduha.cz/doe/pub.html), Briefing sheets (4 briefing sheets about the canal issue published), Bulletin (3 issues), Webpages (ENG: http://www.hnutiduha.cz/doe/pub.html , CZ: http://www.hnutiduha.cz/aktivita/penize/dol.htm), a documentary (launched in January 2005 plus description of the issue on the website updated: http://www.bankwatch.org/newsroom/documents.shtml?x=1525826) A leaflet (in CZ, ENG and German), Proceedings from the May 2006 conference (http://www.hnutiduha.cz/publikace/sbornik_konf_dol.pdf), Press releases, Other publications (Presentation prepared for the Porta Moravica 2005 conference, A sticker "Protect the wetlands, not the DOE Canal route", Calendar for the year 2007, comments on several national strategies)	
Total awarded:	32484 USD
Project start / finish: July 2004 / August 2006	
Grants Officer:	Richard Filcak
Project leader:	Pavel Pribyl
Leading NGO:	First Partner:

Project Description

Hnuti Duha Friends of the Earth Czech Republic Bratislavská 31 602 00 Brno Czech Rep. Tel: +420 5 45214431 Fax: +420 5 45214429 Email: centrum@hnutiduha.cz	Friends of the Earth Slovakia 976 33 Poniky Ponická Huta 65. Tel: +421 48 4193324 Fax: +421 48 4193324 E-mail: foe@changenet.sk	
--	--	--

Project number: 21681		
Project title: Networking the river coalitions for healthy watershed.		
Key Environmental Issues: Nutrient reduction; Water management; Waste management; Guide book; Networking		
Short description: The aim of this project was to improve the management of watersheds by promoting more effective cooperation between various stakeholders, within the framework of river-based networks. The overarching anticipation is that better management results in reduced river pollution. The project involved establishing river coalitions within sub-basins of the Danube; transferring know-how on how to establish and facilitate coalitions among the project partners; and conducting various concrete activities to enhance the quality and protection of the river.		
Results: The concrete activities to be carried out within the project were expected at the outset to be secondary to the establishment of river coalitions. In the end, these concrete activities constitute the most successful element of the project. Progress was made in establishing and developing river coalitions – a great deal of know-how was transferred between partners, all partners had at least informal meetings with various stakeholders, and three ‘river contracts’ were prepared and signed – but the most substantial accomplishments were achieved through the concrete activities. These include: The restoration of a floodplain; the construction of a composting toilet and small biological wastewater treatment system; river cleanups; the construction of new municipal composting areas; and the revitalization of an oxbow on the Hornad river.		
Products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two floodplains cleaned up and re-planted - A composting toilet and small biological wastewater treatment system - Revitalised oxbow - Six municipal composting areas in two different countries - Exhibitions in all five countries - Information brochures on the River Coalition concept 		
Total awarded: 49970 USD		
Project start / finish: September 2004 - September 2006		
Grants Officer: Todd Schenk		
Project leader: Stefan Szabo		
Leading NGO: SOSNA Civic Association Pražská 2. 040 11 Kosice Slovakia Tel: +421 55 644 51 24 Fax: +421 55 644 51 24 Email: sosna@changenet.sk	First Partner: HOLOCEN Nature Protection Organisation 3525 Miskolc Kossuth u. 13. Tel: +36 46 508 944 Fax: +36 46 352 010 E-mail: holocen@holocen.hu	Second Partner: Ecological Association Green Osijek 31000 Osijek Kapucinska 26 Tel: +385 31 207 543 Fax: +385 31 207 543 E-mail: zeleni-osijek@os.htnet.hr
Third Partner: Transylvanian Carpathian Society - Satu Mare (EKE) 3900 Satu Mare Str. I. Budai Deleanu nr. 2.	Fourth Partner: Tisa Klub 24420 Kanjiza M. Tita 32. Tel: 0038124874025	

Tel: +40 261 711050 Fax: +40 261 714580 E-mail: eke@xnet.ro	Fax: 0038124874025 E-mail: theater@cnesa.org.yu	
--	--	--

Extensive project summaries are attached to this report as Appendix IX.

Conclusions and future considerations

Over the last four years, grants amounting to USD 700,000 have been distributed under the auspices of the first round of the Danube Regional Project's small grants component (3.2). These funds enabled NGOs to facilitate the reduction of nutrient and toxic pollution in the Danube River basin. In addition to facilitating the selection process, the REC monitored the implementation of the NGO work.

These grants were divided into two main components. While the national grants focused on fostering stakeholder cooperation in addressing the pollution problems at the national level, the regional grants promoted regional cooperation in trans-boundary projects. The first round of grants implementation, running from 2002 to 2006, resulted in:

- USD 207,754 awarded for five regional projects, each involving NGOs from multiple countries. These projects focused on best farming practices and the basin/sub-basin approach to decision making. Another USD 8,748 was awarded to support NGO meetings focussed on proposal preparation.
- USD 465,431 awarded to support 60 national initiatives which addressed agricultural discharge, municipal discharge, land use and wetlands degradation, and industrial discharge.

In total, 65 projects of national and regional scale were coordinated and monitored by the REC through its country office network covering 11 Danube basin countries.

The most popular problems addressed in the first round of granting related to pollution generated by agricultural activities. NGO initiatives addressing agricultural discharge were addressed by almost 40 % of the NGOs, more specifically focusing on addressing flood management, irrigation, and drainage, with attention to the associated pollution-related effects. Additionally, projects promoted eco-farming methods and alternative rural development.

This was followed in popularity by projects dealing with municipal discharge through addressing urban waste-water collection and treatment. The least popular problem addressed was industrial discharges, with few projects focusing on reducing the risks of the accidental release of pollutants from facilities.

With respect to land use and wetlands, some projects attempted to resurrect degraded - or construct new - wetlands as a natural method to absorb nutrients. Other projects had a more educational focus, trying to raise public awareness of the importance of wetlands and their functions.

The Regional grants brought together 15 NGOs and a number of stakeholders in working together for the Danube river basin. Apart from addressing pollution issues the grants managed to bring the Danube pollution issues in the agenda of their communities, succeed to bring stakeholders around the table and push for locally generated solutions to these problems.

Direct and indirect impacts of NGO actions on nutrient and toxic pollutant reduction

Most of the NGO projects, at both national and regional levels, emphasized public awareness raising and thus had indirect rather than direct effects on pollution reduction. Still many grant recipients carried out activities at the national level that will lead, or have already led, to direct nutrient reduction and removal of

toxins. These activities ranged from illegal dump removals to the reforestation of riverbanks. Other activities called for the construction of artificial wetlands that can function as wastewater treatment areas, the management of hydrophytes and nature reserves, the improvement of water quality in ponds and the creation of three new protected areas. This is not surprising, as one of the strengths of NGOs is their ability to raise public awareness on different issues.

In connection with this, it should be noted that many of the projects have poor indicators therefore not clearly indicating what the environmental benefit of their activities are. The setting of indicators was evaluated as the weakest point of proposal development; therefore, the REC introduces the Logical Framework (LOG Frame) methodology for the second round.

During the first DRP Grants round, NGOs realistically rated their role and power in relation how much they can actually reduce pollution. NGO initiatives were crucial for initiating the public awareness actions in addressing the problem and further play a catalyzing role in tackling the water pollution and cross-cutting issues that in most cases local and national politicians do not view as a priority.

Direct actions of the NGOs included: organising workshops/ conferences on environmental awareness; initiating pollution reduction plans; campaigning on hot spots pollution reduction; educating schools, farmers and other stakeholder; organizing roundtables and conference with transboundary stakeholders; changing consumer's behavior; building up coalitions and researching. Such actions contributed indirectly nutrient reduction through accomplishing the following DRP priorities in the following order:

1. Increased public awareness and knowledge on the pollution and toxics
2. Increased trans-boundary cooperation in the Danube Basin. Grants brought cross border hotspot problems in the agenda in both countries and facilitated processes
3. Increased knowledge and involvement of stakeholders (pupils, farmers, consumers, decision-makers) on pollution problems and reduction measures
4. Applied regional innovative approaches such as coalition building to reduce pollution
5. Improved awareness and support for best agriculture technology and best farming practices
6. Increased involvement of experts.

Actions considered as "end of pipe approach" included construction of a wetlands, build composting sites, constructing reed beds, reforestation of the riverbanks, removal of sites such as a pig farm which improved the self-cleaning mechanisms of the river. As well there were a series of direct clean up actions such as removal of dumps from the waterways managed by the NGOs reduced the amount of waste in the river bed.

Actions such as introducing environmentally friendly technology or campaigning on stopping the cross-border canal construction are considered as preventive actions and can impact directly the river pollution in the long term since preventing a canal from being built helps the protection of wetlands that serve as nutrient sinks

Five regional projects applied different approaches ranging from broad promotion to specific targeted preventive work, such as introducing and promoting environmentally friendly technologies or campaigning against the construction of a canal.

Typical NGO actions - including awareness raising, education, campaigning, meetings and building contacts – foster change in attitudes and behaviour among different key players in the river basin, and therefore have an indirect effect on nutrient and toxics reduction in the long term. Other actions, such as rehabilitating wetlands, constructing composting areas, or cleaning and reconstructing river courses, integrated with some preventive actions, have more direct impacts on nutrient and toxic pollution in the River basin.

Comments on stakeholders and tools used

A range of stakeholders have been targeted, including farmers, authorities, school children, enterprises, and designers. In general, it can be said that the project reached a wide range of stakeholders, as expected. With respect to the tools used during project implementation, considering the nature of NGO work, lobbying and awareness-raising were used extensively, whereas research and water monitoring were less popular tools.

PROJECT SET-UP

The project staff is composed of members of the REC's NGO Support Programme staff, employed at the REC head office in Szentendre Hungary; members of the REC Country Office staff in the Danube Basin countries REC-CEE operates within; and representatives of REC Moldova.

REC head office

Project director: Robert Atkinson, Director of Civil Initiatives

Activity manager: Entela Pinguli, Grants Manager, NGO Support Programme

Project management

The following chart shows how the work has been managed:

